

UNUSUAL GIFTS

That Cost A Little And Please A Lot

by Barbara Sher

When my daughter Marissa was four years old, she flashed her eyes at every good-looking male and told me she wanted to grow up to be Cinderella. It wasn't what I had in mind; I was thinking more along the lines of an astrophysicist-prima ballerina. But not one to impose my expectations on others, I called a local flower shop and ordered a pink nosegay bouquet for her birthday. She was thrilled and put on the lacy white slip she called her Cinderella dress and all her costume jewelry and with her nosegay she looked, I admit, like a fairy princess.

I'm telling you this in case you have a Cinderella of your own and need an idea for a gift.

Finding the right gift can be wearing. I find it easier if I think of something ahead of time rather than wander around a store and end up buying something expensive that's still not right.

So, if you want ideas, here are inexpensive gifts for children that I have tried that went over well:

Colored ribbon: Get a large assortment of about one yard of each color. Include different textures such as satins, velvet and woven. Buy a floral tin or something lovely to put them in.

Business supplies: Buy items such as paper clips, staplers, hole punchers, folding files, index cards (with box), ledger, tape, rulers, receipt book with carbon, stamp pad, stamps. You can get an empty boot box to sort it in. They often will give these big boxes away at shoe stores. These supplies will keep kids busy for hours and isn't that what busi-ness is all about anyway?

Cotton: A box of cotton or cotton balls. Kids sometimes just like to plunge their hands into all that softness or use them to stuff small pillows or paste on pictures to make clouds and beards.

An all purpose cape: If you are good at sewing, make a cape out of velvet or glossy satin or some other spectacular material so your child can be a super person or prince or sorceress. If you don't sew, second hand stores are good for finding dramatic clothes and gobs of gaudy costume jewelry.



Shoe box art: Most shoe stores will give you all the shoeboxes you could ever want if you ask them to save some for you. They make wonderful trains for the younger child by connecting them with a piece of sting; leave a long piece at the front for pulling. You can add wheels, paint, animals, etc. Larger boot boxes can be decorated and personalized to make a private place for your child's "treasures".

Magnifying glass: I once read "No self respecting five year old should be without a magnifying glass". I took it to heart and by adding a string of yarn, making a small magnifying glass into a necklace for my then five year old. She wore it constantly for weeks and weeks checking out the whole world, up close and personal.

Ream of paper and package of pens: I can't imagine there is an up and coming artist, writer or scribbler alive that wouldn't love 500 sheets of paper all their own!

Books: Always books. It's impossible to overestimate the importance of books in a child's development. A man named Stickland Gilian said it well: You may have tangible love, caskets of jewels and coffer of gold; richer than I you can never be I had a mother who read to me. ♥



Barbara Sher M.A., O.T.R., an occupational therapist and author of nine books on children's games. This game is adapted from Barbara's new book *THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF MOTOR, SOCIAL AND SENSORY GAMES: Using Children's Natural Love Of Play To Enhance Key Skills And Promote Inclusion*. Check out Barbara's other game books at any on-line bookstore or get a free game designed for your child at her web site: www.gameslady.com